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JOINT EVALUATION OF SOVIET MISSILE THREAT IN CUBA

PREPARED BY

Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee
Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee
National Photographic Interpretation Center

2100 HOURS

18 OCTOBER 1962

This report is based on relatively complete photo interpretation of U-2 photography made on:

14 October 1962 Mission 3101
15 October 1962 Missions 3102 & 3103

Very preliminary and incomplete readout of coverage of the six U-2 Missions flown on 17 October 1962 are also reflected in this report.

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1 of 5

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CONCLUSIONS IN BRIEF

Offensive Missiles

1. At least one Soviet regiment consisting of eight launchers and sixteen 1020-nm (SS-4) medium range ballistic missiles is now deployed in western Cuba at two launch sites. These sites presently contain un-revetted, field-type launchers which rely on mobile erection, checkout, and support equipment. These missiles are probably those reported moving into this area during September. Although there is continuing improvement of these sites, these mobile missiles must be considered operational now and could be launched within 18 hours after the decision to launch. A refire from each launcher could be accomplished within 5 hours after the initial firing.

2. Fixed, soft sites which could achieve initial operational capability during December 1962 are now being developed near Havana. We believe that the 2200-nm (SS-5) intermediate range ballistic missile is probably intended for these sites. Photography of these sites show eight, fixed launch pads under construction which probably equate to an additional missile regiment with eight ready missiles and eight for refire.

3. All of these offensive missile systems are Soviet manned and controlled. We believe that offensive action by these systems would be commanded from the Soviet Union but have not yet found the command and control communication links.

Nuclear Warheads for Offensive Missiles

4. There is no positive evidence of the presence of nuclear warheads in Cuba, nor have weapons storage facilities of the standard, highly secure Soviet type been identified. However, there are seven, large Cuban

- 1 -

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munitions' storage areas south of Havana which could be converted to Soviet needs in a relatively short time. Temporary storage could be provided in ships or field sites which might not be identified.

5. Nevertheless, one must assume that nuclear warheads could now be available in Cuba to support the offensive missile capability as it becomes operational. The warheads expected for these missiles weigh approximately 3,000 pounds and have yields in the low megaton range.

Coastal Defense Missiles

6. Three coastal defense missile sites have now been identified in Cuba, two of which must now be considered operational (Banes and Santa Cruz del Norte). In an alert status, these cruise missiles can be fired in about 10 minutes, with subsequent firings from each launcher at 5 minute intervals.

Air Defense Missiles

7. There are now 22 surface-to-air missiles (SA-2) sites located in Cuba, nine of which are believed to be individually operational at the present time. The remaining SA-2 sites could be operational in two to three weeks. Each site contains six missiles with six additional missiles in an adjacent hold area. The initial firing can take place anytime after an alert, providing the site has reached readiness. Refire from a single launcher will take approximately 3 to 5 minutes.

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- 2 -

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3 of 5

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Force Levels

9. There are now at least sixteen 1020-nm Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba which are in such a state of readiness that they could be fired within 18 hours of a decision to launch. It is likely that other installations now being examined in photography will raise the number to 32, all of which could be ready in the next week. Furthermore, 8 launchers with sixteen 2200-nm missiles will probably be operational in Cuba during December 1962. We must emphasize that this is the visible threat, and that additional missiles may be discovered as additional photography is analyzed.

Support and Supply

10. Offensive missiles systems are being introduced into Cuba primarily through the Port of Mariel. Possible central missile checkout, storage and repair bases have been tentatively located at Soroa near the western deployment sites and at Managua south of Havana. It is significant that all three of the Soviet missiles now being deployed in Cuba (SS-4, SS-5, SA-2) probably use red fuming nitric acid as an oxidizer so that a common propellant supply and storage could be used.

Significance

11. The magnitude of the total Soviet missile force being deployed indicates that the USSR intends to develop Cuba into a prime strategic base, rather than as a token show of strength.

12. A mixed force of 1020- and 2200-nm missiles would give the USSR a significant strategic strike capability against almost all targets in the U.S. (see map). By deploying stockpiled shorter range ballistic missiles at overseas bases against which we have no BMEWS warning capability, the

- 3 -

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Soviet Union will supplement its ICBM home force in a significant way. This overseas strategic force is protected by an extensive SA-2 deployment in Cuba.

13. This same offensive force also poses a common threat to the U.S. and a large portion of Latin America for the first time.

14. The USSR is making a major military investment in Cuba with some of their most effective guided missile systems. The planning for this operation must have started at least one year ago and put into motion last spring.

ADDENDUM

Two additional launch sites have just been found north of Santa Clara (Mission 3107). Neither site was present on 5 September 1962. Analysis is still underway; only preliminary views can be expressed. One site is similar to the fixed soft site described in paragraph 2. This site is in a more advanced state of readiness and could have the essential features for an operational capability within one month. The other site is similar to the field-type installation described in paragraph 1. These new sites are not included in the numbers appearing elsewhere in this paper.

- 4 -

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